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THE VALLEY OF DECISION:

A PLEA FOR UNBROKEN FEALTY ON THE PART OF THE LOYAL
STATES TO THE CONSTITUTION AND THE UNION, DESPITE
THE OFFENCES OF THE REBEL STATES.

A DISCOURSE,

—GIVEN—

ON OCCASION OF THE NATIONAL FAST,

Sept. 26, 1861,

IN ALL SOULS' CHURCH,

—BY—

HENRY W. BELLOWS.

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DISCOURSE.

"Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision."—JOEL iii, 14.

THIS is the cry which is now sounding through our plains and mountains, from the St. Johns to the Rio Grande, from the Tortugas to Vanconver's Land? Over the grave of our great Washington, his children are bending with sword and bayonet pointed at each other's breasts. The valley of his pride and affection, that fed his strength and solaced his weakness, that caught his first breath and his last sigh, is become the valley of decision, where "multitudes, multitudes" are seeking by outnumbering each other to prove that "the day of the Lord" is brightening into victory, on the one hand for those who claim a political right to break up the nation it was his glory to found, and on the other hand for those who assert it to be the most urgent and solemn of all duties to maintain with their blood, and at any sacrifice of the blood of those who deny it, the perpetual union and unbroken nationality of these United States.

It is indeed a solemn controversy for us! We cannot too earnestly cry "multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision." We need them there, and if we fail to send them, all our fasting and prayer will not hide from God the hypocrisy of our patriotism! Such a valley of decision as that to which the hosts of loyal and rebellious States are now hurrying, was rarely open before. So great a stake never hung upon so critical a line. Were that valley to witness a decision against us, who can speak the depth of our humiliation, or estimate the sum of our misfortunes? But it will not! "The day of the

Lord is near in the valley of decision," and it will prove how vain are the boasts, how deluded the hopes of those who have exhausted the strength of their loins, almost before we have raised the little finger of our might.

The grounds of this hopefulness I proceed now to state at length. I propose in the present discourse to examine the workings of our institutions in a time of war; to look at the administration, the government and the nation in their several relations to this contest; to discuss incidentally the several policies, which the unavoidable moods of the people have inclined them to adopt; and while explaining the past experiences and accounting for the present tendencies of thought and feeling—to urge a policy more conservative than is just now popular, upon the sober reflection of the nation.

Here is a war going on between—on the one hand—twenty free and loyal States, occupied by over twenty millions of people, rich, educated; more moral and religious than any equal population in the world (which is not saying much by a true standard); accustomed to labor, and possessing vigor and patience; a people loving and revering their institutions, and anxious and willing to defend them: and, on the other hand, ten or eleven rebellious States, occupied by eight millions of people, with little capital and less education, poor schools, an inferior morality, and a more superstitious piety; an agricultural people, cursed with negro slavery, a monotonous industry, and a large class of idle and degraded whites. Without any fair pretension to equality with the great North in commerce, or even in agriculture (as has been abundantly proved), not half equal in population, and almost beneath comparison in any of the arts or sciences, in literature, and especially in the great art of living; this dependent body of States, who looked to us for shoes, hats, cloths, entlery, salt and hay; and in the reality of whose purpose to go to war with us nobody six months ago of a sensible turn of mind seriously believed; has not only rebelled against that first class power which had the respect and fear of the world—the United States government; but actually maintained its rebellion with increasing energy and success; has beleagured and endangered the Capitol, which at the moment we speak is threatened by its army; has put

the government to its utmost exertions to defend the dignity of the flag ; has routed us in the first great battle ; has broken our blockade and overrun our domestic sea with privateers ; has extorted the respect of foreign governments, and is not unlikely, in spite of all we can do, to win a pseudo-recognition from England and France ; has created a peace party within our own loyal States ; compelled us to the demeaning necessity of proclaiming martial law in Baltimore and St. Louis, and disposed our indignant and alarmed people to administer lynch-law upon various disloyal presses within our own borders !

What can account for this undesirable state of things ? Is it because the South has a just cause of rebellion and a rightful claim to independence, that her weakness is mightier than our strength ? No ! she herself knows and confesses that the public sentiment of the world is against her, and puts her trust not in her right, but in her will and in her sword. Even those who from jealousy of our undivided power, most desire her independence, have not the impudence to whisper any justification of her course. She is without a respectable defender in the open court of the world. Her best friends abroad dare only by indirection to sustain her cause or justify her sedition. Even their hopes and expectations cannot so far warp their judgment as to put the Southern revolt upon the smallest moral footing. The civilized world knows that it is a conspiracy of ambitious politicians, enraged at the necessary decline of their sectional influence in the republic ; and taking advantage of the sensitiveness, ignorance and animosity of the slave power, to wrest apart a region where they again can rule !—How then is the formidableness and the success of the rebels to be accounted for ?

Certainly not upon any grounds which will be ultimately favorable to their cause, or which will redound to the credit of their civilization. It is indeed the badness of their cause, and their own inferiority in all the constituents of a true civilization, which have made them potent and successful thus far. They are living and fighting from stolen forts and with stolen arms, commanded by oath-breakers and men who were plotting treason while trusted in the most confidential posts in the

government. They owe their advantages chiefly to the tenderness and scrupulosity of the federal government, which most reluctantly credited the wickedness of their intentions, and allowed their treason to flourish in the very face and eyes of an overpowering strength, in hopes it would repent, and never use against such forbearance the power it was suffered to acquire. The love of the Union which pervades the loyal States made them incredulous of any persistent assaults upon it from the slave States. They reckoned alike on their discretion, their patriotism and their morality, and with the greatest difficulty confessed themselves deceived in each. In this very hour it is almost impossible to arouse the North to the full reality of the revolt. It proceeds upon motives and by measures so foreign to the experience, so contrary to the habits and feelings of the loyal States, that a year must yet elapse, in all probability, before any adequate sense of the enormity of the conspiracy will beat its way with cannon and bayonet into the mind of a great, honest and civilized people, accustomed to think that human beings in the nineteenth century are governed by their interests, their consciences and their affections, and not by their spite and their folly.

There are moreover general and universal reasons why the North should prove a blundering and a disappointed antagonist of the South during the first year of the war—reasons most honorable and eloquent; reasons which will turn into arguments and weapons of success, after acting as grounds of weakness and defeat.

On the part of the North this is a war of *principle*: on the part of the South, of pride and policy. Wars of principle are much more difficult to wage with vigor and immediate success than wars of interest or passion. They appeal to a less definite, a more remote, and of course a less popular class of feelings. A war of policy or of passion presents a sharp, crisp cry, easily caught and easily re-echoed. Wars of principle imply persons of principle to conduct them, and methods of principle by which they are pursued. They raise scruples which must be laid, involve a character and conscience which must be respected, and in every way impair at the first, the decisiveness, vigor and promptness which reckless passion and unscrupu-

lous policy know how to use. A ruffian has very much the advantage of a Christian gentleman in a street quarrel.—He has no respect for rights, appearances, or consequences. He loves a brawl, and the better dressed and the more respectable his antagonist, the greater the satisfaction of flinging him into the mud. It is not main strength or superior courage, that gives him his first advantages; but the reluctance which his foe has to quarrel at all; especially to quarrel with a ruffian; and most of all to quarrel in a ruffian way. A war of principle commences reluctantly, with a thousand misgivings of conscience, and ten thousand antipathies of taste, sensibility and affection. It proceeds feebly, because embarrassed with scruples and doubts. It at first only *preaches* war, and attempts to do by words of warning and threatening, or by proclamations, and votes of men and money, what has in the end, after most debilitating delay, to be done with powder and ball. But fairly brought to this, its conscience actually cast into cannon, its convictions fairly sharpened into bayonets, let policy and passion beware, for their day of judgment is at hand!

Again. Wars are inaugurated more slowly, and their earlier measures are more feeble and inadequate, in prosperous, enlightened and highly civilized communities, than in less wealthy, less contented and less developed ones. It is not merely that peace and comfort, justice and mercy diminish the martial spirit of a people, but that a rich and diversified social system has so many interests dependent on the continuance of order and peace—has so much to lose by the most successful war, and so little to gain by it, has so unreservedly accommodated itself to the temperate climate of established law, that it will suffer anything but the loss of less-respect, before committing itself irretrievably to the fearful arbitrament of the sword. There is no comparison between the sacrifices which a prosperous people make on entering on a war, and those required of a people accustomed to have and to expect little.

Without a wide-spread commerce and a diversified trade, with an income derived directly from the soil, and not from stocks and mortgages; with no splendid cities, and little do-

mestic elegance or comfort, what has such a people to dread in war, when compared with a country whose ships dot every sea, whose trade penetrates every portion of the globe, whose wealth is invested in rail-roads and banks, in marine and fire insurance companies, and in the thousand new enterprises which depend on capital for their start, and on peace for their success? It is a fearful thing for a rich and happy and powerful country to go to war! In proportion to its wealth and power will usually be its reluctance; and in proportion to its reluctance will be its indecision, its willingness to suffer many indignities, and to pay with many reverses, for the chance of averting the catastrophe! But, the very wealth and prosperity which makes it slow to anger and forbearing towards provocation, much enduring and even low spirited, must render it tremendously energetic and powerful, when it is fairly aroused to the peril that threatens all its possessions. If it have little to gain by victory it has every thing to lose by defeat. We have only to look at the unpromising way in which English wars commence and the successful way in which they terminate, to understand how a high civilization hesitates and stumbles at the opening of a quarrel, but rallies and crushes everything before it before it is ended.

Again. War is a peculiarly foreign and inconvenient work for a democracy. The distribution of responsibility, the subdivision of labor, the individual independence and privacy of judgment, encouraged and attained under free and popular institutions, are eminently incompatible with the concentration, unanimity, alertness and decision required in the inception and carrying on of a prompt, vigorous and successful war. Freemen have to unlearn their social wisdom, resign their individuality, agglomerate their jealously guarded independencies, and unsay and undo much that they value most in peace, before they are prepared to adopt the measures and methods, the prompt, common, united, comprehensive policy required by war. Consolidation, unlimited confidence, the abandonment of debate, criticism and jealousy of power, disregard of economy, neglect of private interests, wishes and tastes, these, the weaknesses of peace are the sinews of war; these, the common scourges of a monarchy, and most dreaded

by a commonwealth in its pacific state, are the sole safeguards of a republic in its time of war. But when danger and suffering have taught democracies, as in Athens, the necessity of suppressing private opinions for the public good, and sinking private interests in the common welfare, what solidarity of determination and action ever attained by absolutism equals that which is presented by the voluntary consent of the most disintegrate and individual communities, merging their intelligent atoms in a mass, that is determined to have only one will and one way? No class of men in the world are less disposed to become soldiers, or are less easily converted into them, than the best class—those who think, feel and act for themselves; but none are capable of such discipline, courage, and efficiency when brought to the necessity.

Again. The great political maxim of freemen, “*that government is best which governs least,*” a maxim never to be enough honored in peace is obliged to be reversed in war, and the period during which the vigor, self-direction and self-protection essential to free institutions in their ordinary and pacific state, are passing back for the uses of war into the shrunk-en veins of the government, purposely and wisely kept at the lowest point of activity in periods of prosperity, is the weakest moment of a republic. Just how far it is safe and prudent in ordinary times to allow the machinery of government to grow rusty lest it should usurp the offices of liberty by too intrusive an activity, we have no time to consider. On the whole, the rapidity with which our political apparatus has adjusted itself to that for which it was not made, and should not be most valued—a state of war—is favorable to that policy of free institutions which places as little of the life of the people out of their own hands as possible. It is probably better to run the risk of feebleness in possible wars than encounter the certainty of over-government in peace. Important lessons, both of encouragement and warning, are to be learned from our present serious experience in regard to the nature and extent of the government when on a peace footing. But it is important that the strength of our institutions should not be absolutely confounded with the vigor and stability of the federal government. Our principal institutions are municipal, social,

educational and religious; not federal. Our strength as a people, our prosperity and success are not to be sought in the study of either our congress, cabinet, or general government. Let the critic who would understand us, live in our families, travel in our interior, talk with our common people, compare the manners, customs and standards of morals, of living and of intelligence, with those of any people on the earth, and if they prove not immeasurably higher we will confess that our institutions have failed. But because our very local and individual success has weakened in time of peace the importance of the general government, created indifference to political action, and allowed some temporary decay to attack the federal machinery; or because slavery, an evil recognized from the first, has even seriously deranged the workings of the central engine, we are not for a moment, conscious as we are of the grave misfortune and serious peril of such a disorder, to overlook, or allow others to overlook the fact that American institutions are not identical with the mere mechanism of the U. S. Government, and that we, the same people who made it, are fully capable of mending it, and if necessary, of amending it; and that not a jot of our liberty, our intelligence, or our worth are going to disappear with any calamity which may threaten our present federal relations and organization.

So much in explanation of the past of this war; so much in defence of our institutions, on the hypothesis that our federal government has shown itself weak and incompetent to deal with our difficulties in a way to satisfy the expectations of patriots at home and critics abroad; so much even on the supposition that the government breaks down, in favor of the prospect of the nations surviving, and the genuine civilization of the free and loyal States triumphing over the illegitimate civilization of the slave States.

Six weeks ago, we must needs confess, it was natural and necessary to seek encouragement and hope in contemplating the nation, as a power not adequately represented by the government. We did not see our strength, resolution, earnestness and energy represented there. We found ourselves outnumbered in every battle-field, while our own offered regiments were rejected, for reasons we could not then understand. The first great battle, under the general conduct of our great

military chieftain, and the immediate command of a carefully chosen U. S. general, had, unexpectedly to most, gone terribly against us. There was a natural, an almost universal feeling, that our imperfect preparation, our unsuccessful military guidance, our ill-chosen officers, were due to the lack of judgment, energy and statesmanship on the part of the administration, or more charitably, to the essential weakness of the government itself, and its inadequacy to meet so terrible a crisis. In that state of mind, and under what we now believe to be erroneous impressions, we were ready at the North to demand either the re-casting of the administration, or the adoption of a policy which should make the preservation of the Union, the constitution and the laws, secondary to any methods prompted by the right of self-preservation. A conscious ability to maintain the cause of liberty and right, to perpetuate American principles and ideas, made the people terribly impatient of the seeming inability of the government to give effect to their will and expression to their determination. They did not stop to ask themselves what other account might be given of the slowness and the delay at Washington besides incompetency or lack of zeal and energy in the Cabinet, or worse—the failure of the governmental machinery itself, put to this new and tremendous trial. They did not at once appreciate that this war stretches over a wider territory, embraces vaster spaces and more numerous strategical points, calls for a more extensive and efficient locomotive apparatus, and a finer and grander generalship, than anything in the history of modern campaigns ; that a commercial and industrial people, who, out of its cities, had absolutely forgotten the use of arms, was suddenly called on to furnish two or three mighty *corps d'armee*, and with a bare handful of educated military men, to extemporize thousands of officers to lead it ; that our little army of regulars, accustomed chiefly to the defence of the frontiers against the attacks of savages, afforded but a tiny skeleton on which to clothe a vast national force ; that neither in waggons, uniforms and accoutrements, in artillery, or in other weapons, especially after the grand larceny the nation had suffered from the house-breakers who successfully passed themselves off as house-keepers in the late administration,

were we supplied with the means of arming half the patriotism of the North ; and that the Cabinet, in a capital city, stifled in the malaria of the disloyal Potomac, and surrounded in every department with the traitors whom successive Southern administrations had stalled in every crib of the national stable—with spies in every company, at every board, and of all ages and colors, and both sexes, had difficulties to contend with, protean in shape and gigantic in form—difficulties which no energy, zeal or patriotism could deal with at once or decisively—difficulties which only time and patience, and tentative processes could safely and successfully overcome—difficulties which in part the manufacturing resources of the nation must have time to relieve—difficulties in other part of a moral and political kind, felt in their full force only by those directly and immediately responsible for dealing with them, and which it also required time to treat. Nay, the nation itself would not have borne at the start the very measures it afterwards reproachfully demanded from the government. It was not only the border States that were to be humored and conciliated before being constrained and subdued, but a great party at the North, at the outset immensely sore and hostile to the administration, had also to be studied and deferred to, lest the anticipated rupture and division here, on which the South so boldly reckoned, should become disastrous history. The administration could not reward its own partisans with offices, and must suffer their impatient and not unnatural complaints ; it could not boldly express its own anti-slavery policy after the desertion of the Southern senators, representatives and judges made it in some measure the guardian of their unrepresented rights under the constitution. If they had stayed, the administration would have expected them to look out for themselves, while it more freely spoke the mind of the majority that elected it. But so long as the theory of the government is that the South is not a belligerent but a rebel ; that this is not war, but revolt ; that our military force is a vast *posse comitatus* and not an ordinary army, it is bound to acknowledge that the Rebel States are still under the constitution, and though to be treated as criminals, are still entitled to the rights of citizens.

All these difficulties, when properly considered, especially when they are understood as they only can be, when the secret history of this war is written, will, in our judgment, show that the administration has put forth its utmost exertions, and exhibited an alacrity and administrative ability which entitle it to the confidence and the gratitude of the nation. Undoubtedly, the government of the United States must, upon the very theory of it, be usually far behind the nation in power, in zeal, in energy. We keep it there by the principled smallness of our army and navy, by the untempting pettiness of our governmental salaries, and by the natural and proper jealousy with which our towns, counties and States retain all the local authority which can be saved from delegation to the central power. It is the glory, beauty and success of our American system. Long may this policy continue to enjoy the confidence and affection of the people! Yet it is simply impossible that the army and navy we know to be adequate to our ordinary condition, or the departments and officials equal to our usual wants, should at once be competent to deal with such a state of affairs as the last six months has presented.—But ought we to be always prepared for a vast civil war, such as can only occur once in a century or two? Should we imitate those foreign nations that emulate each other in Cherbourg and Portsmouth, Dover and Calais; and in great standing armies, such as France, Austria, Prussia, Russia and England maintain? No! the theory of our government is, that the people, if rendered free, intelligent and happy, will on emergency, through the spontaneous exercise of their liberality, versatility and patriotism, supply speedily the lack of preparation in the government; and after briefly suffering the inevitable consequences of a small governmental apparatus, rapidly swell the military and all the other resources of the government to an extent sufficient to cope with any enemy. We expend on the nation, we entrust to the nation, we rely upon the nation; where other people expend upon, entrust to and rely upon the government. Our preparation for war is, in the main, the education of the people in the spirit of liberty; in the use and enjoyment of freedom, in the exercise of all their rights and all their powers; and in the wealth, skill, versatili-

ty, talent, independence and patriotism which such institutions create, we expect to find the spirit and the will, the ability and the genius, to make a mighty navy and army, and a mighty government too, if not in a month or six months, yet soon enough to protect ourselves from the last consequences of foreign insult or domestic treason, and to punish with ever memorable retribution those who presume upon our peaceful habits, and during their short successes dare to taunt our un-military ways.

We have an illustration of the rapidity and success with which the life, energy and genius of the nation, usually lodged in its limbs, flows to the governmental heart, in the extraordinary rapidity with which our people have already converted themselves—against all their tastes, habits and antecedents—into a great military power! Unaccustomed to arms, unused to subordination, jealous of military authority; little interested even in federal movements; strongly individual, and most reluctant to merge self-government in routine and machinery; well-fed, well-clothed, and in easy and happy circumstances at home, our people have resisted every previous habit, overcome every natural taste, in the ardor of their patriotism, and made themselves by a rapid and complete transformation, a nation of soldiers. Yes, of soldiers! and such soldiers, we verily believe, as the world never saw! Military education and martial habits and training, are important things, but no free nation can depend upon them for its protection against either domestic or foreign foes, when either rises into magnitude. Military establishments and standing armies belong to aristocratic and unpopular forms of government. The militia and the volunteer force are the grand defence of democratic institutions. A government resting on the will of the people must trust itself to the protection of the people, who *will* themselves into soldiers, when their liberties are threatened. This is a volunteer government; a nation of volunteers; and it must be protected in the last extremity, by a volunteer soldiery. Volunteer officers leading volunteer ranks, will outdo in the end, either its militia or its regular army. And great as this mystery may be to other nations, or to merely military men, it is no mystery to those who know that affection, intelli-

gence, and a direct stake in the conflict supply qualities which are more than a match for experience, drill and professional knowledge; while they create an aptitude for receiving these, which enables a few months to do, with such a people, the work of years in respect of military education. The efficient leaders in this war will prove to be not purely military men, but men educated both in civil and in military life; men who early trained in the science of war, have passed the chief period of their lives in the active duties of civilians. The sphere of a military man in our country in time of peace is so contracted, that let his genius be what it may, he cannot but shrink in course of years in all the proportions which fit him for large practical views and operations, even of a military kind. The exceptions are of those men who have been kept by the government busy at large public works; thus bringing them into various associations with civilians, and accustoming them to large and complicated affairs, both monetary and administrative. Such a man is the Quarter-master General Meigs, who could not be surpassed by any civilian in competency for his post; one of the most exacting in the army or the government. The real life, talent and energy of the nation must find its way into the army and navy before the government can do what the country demands. And they are passing there just as rapidly as a proper, decent and necessary regard for forms and vested rights, and natural and educated expectations will permit. Who would not despise a government that without first testing the competency of its regular officers, crowded civilians over their heads: or without giving age and rank its opportunity, hastily overrode both, to satisfy its impatience for energy and success?

Position, expectation, rank have their rights, and they are to be respected. They must at first be trusted and followed. When they come short of the case, they must be superseded. And in a war like this, and on the scale of this, *competency*, and competency alone, comes very rapidly to be the profound necessity which both people and government consider. He who watches the new appointments and the new orderings—who notices who are at the chief posts of danger and in the places of highest command, will see that the administration, without

undignified haste or unfeeling neglect, is placing the right men in the right places; mingling the claims of civil and administrative power with those of military experience; lifting volunteers according to their capacity and genius to their proper height; placing—a glorious augury—Dupont and Davis, and Rogers and Porter in one fleet; and men like McClellan and Burnside, and Banks and Dix, and Fremont and Sigel and Rosecrans—all civilians as much as soldiers—all with hearts full of the freshest life-blood of our energetic, wide and deep national life, at the head of our several columns.

We are neither the apologists for, nor the eulogists of, the administration, considered as a republican administration.—Thank God we have risen as a people above all party considerations. But no one can during these last months have passed much time at the seat of government, and enjoyed more than common opportunities to understand the working of things, without feeling it to be a duty to advocate the hearty and trustful support of the administration, simply because it is the government; and because it has done all that could be reasonably expected under the circumstances and in the difficulties amid which it has been struggling.

Moreover, it seems important to urge, that while this is a people's war, to be carried on by the generous sacrifices of the people, and under the leadings of the popular will properly expressed, it is not now, whatever it may have threatened to become—whatever our panic fears may at one time have led us almost to hope it would be made—a national revolution, through which daily experience was to be our only guide; a war which the newspapers or the pulpit, or the popular orators were to carry on, under the inspiration of humanity, or piety, or patriotism. Had the government broken down instead of strengthening every day—had it continued, as at one time it was feared it might do, to lose; however unjustly, the confidence of the nation—had the peril of invasion of our capital from our rebel enemy increased, then we might have been obliged to say, “the law of self-preservation is the first law of every nation. We will no longer vainly seek to save ourselves by legal or constitutional methods. The life of the country is threatened—aye, is in imminent, urgent danger. We

demand new leaders, a new policy, a total disregard of all past agreements, compromises and pledges. We will cut away the constitution, or anything else to save the national ship from foundering. If slavery is the assassin of the nation, shoot it down without mercy! If we must exterminate our enemy, or be exterminated by him, let us not be chary about our weapons, but seize the first and the heaviest that come to hand! Let us begin with declaring emancipation in the border States, and write as we advance, FREEDOM TO THE SLAVE on every banner.

Who can deny the thrill of satisfaction that such language sent and still sends to the heart; or does not impulsively exclaim that it would pay for almost every other misfortune to rid the nation of that shameful curse? Doubtless there were many among the best and purest in the land, who were quite reconciled to the alleged inability of the government to protect itself without adopting a policy as near to revolution as possible, because they deemed, in all probability, that would free the slave, whatever other trouble it might bring on the nation.

But on cooler reflection, is there not much to chasten these sentiments and give pause to the policy they would inspire? The government has been compelled already, for its own salvation and for the protection of the nation, to transcend many laws; to assume many illegal responsibilities; to use much martial law and to violate some of the most cherished sanctities of the constitution. It has, however, evidently most reluctantly, most cautiously and with the profoundest regret, seen itself driven to this course. It must very well know that only the most desperate necessity could justify it; and that after the necessity had passed by, many, underrating, or forgetting it, would hold the government to a very jealous account for yielding to it. But with a conscience, which the memory of their sacred oaths of office must have constantly invigorated, the government has continually sought to confine itself within the channels of its legitimate functions and powers. And as it gains strength and more ability to control the rebellion, it shows a still greater sensibility to its oaths, a more anxious disposition to use as few of the rights of revolution, or the legalized ille-

galities of martial law, as the most strenuous employment of its normal powers can make possible.

And it is to this policy, unpopular because seemingly postponing the downfall of slavery; unpopular, because not in the high enthusiastic vein of mere moralists or pietists; unpopular, because so easily stigmatized as temporizing and half-way, that in our sober and religious judgment, the good sense, the loyalty, and the piety of the nation ought from this time forth to lend its trustful and complete support.

We are bound to uphold the government, the constitution and the laws, or to pronounce them annulled by revolution. If we are not prepared for revolution (and God knows we have no moral right to proceed to that, except under the direst necessity, to which no decent pretence can now be made), we are bound to abide, we do not say not by the policy of the administration, but by the policy of the constitution itself; and that policy forbids us to deal with slavery, under present circumstances, otherwise than as the constitution allows. We have boasted that this war was not a war upon slavery, though it has been created by slavery; not a war upon the South, though it has been brought about by the South. Let us make good our boast. If we are a government, and mean to abide by the government—if we are a nation and mean to abide by our antecedents as a nation, let us not weakly own that our constitution and our Union are failures; that our fathers made a fabric that would not stand a century; or that the one great but inevitable evil accepted by them, and woven in as a dark thread in our otherwise unshaded fabric of political life, we cannot now ravel out by patent constitutional ways, but must tear the whole warp and woof in shreds to pluck it out of our garments.

We little know the terrible consequences of even the most moral and virtuous anarchy; of breaking up a government and a constitution even for the most serious and disinterested ends. Sooner or later indeed, we shall have to pay heavily for the necessary wounds given to law and constitutional liberty, by the exigencies of this rebellion. Revolt on one side tends to produce tyranny on the other; the absurd claims of State sovereignty, to excuse or even make indispensable a dangerous

excess of federal power. The conveniences of martial law, slowly nurse military dictatorships. History teaches us that the despotism of the sword is something that grows from very innocent beginnings. It is instructive and it is alarming to see how those who have been the friends of the largest liberty and the greatest personal independence, now impetuously favor centralization, dictatorship, irresponsible and illegal power, if it only serve their immediate purpose. They see no danger in arresting citizens on mere suspicion, in quenching unpopular and unpatriotic presses, in taking any amount of unconstitutional liberty with State or private rights, if only the rebellion is more quickly put down, and slavery more rapidly got rid of. We allow, for we feel, that this is all very pleasant now. It meets our wishes, it has our cordial sympathy. But we confess that we dread the direction in which these things point. We know whither they have gone in other rebellions—how bitter the fruits such seed have borne! and therefore we warn the country it is time to return as swiftly as possible to the normal law; to stick by the constitution, and to sustain the government most heartily just where we see it most scrupulous of law, and most tender of all the rights of all the people. To risk our constitution and our union, our historic life and national identity, even to get rid at a blow, of slavery, is what only fanatics and reckless enthusiasts would dare to propose or could hope would succeed. But revolution would not rid us of slavery; it would merely change its form and leave us the refuse of a race^o of negro serfs, to suffer in unspeakable ways from their own ignorance and inaptitude to self-protection, after deluging the soil of the South with mingled streams of Saxon and African blood.

Riddance of slavery is the longing of every true American heart; but violent, unmethodized, rapid emancipation would be the gravest wrong we could do the slave. We have no right to injure him so fatally in order to clear our skirts from the stain of slavery. We are bound as a nation to set him free; but in ways safe, favorable and just for him. And if this war be vigorously carried on by the government, with the cordial and unlimited support of the people, but upon constitutional principles—with the smallest possible violence to

law, and with the greatest tenderness to our political obligations, we shall in God's good providence do more to break the power of slavery, and to prepare for the safe and rapid extinction of it, than we could do by a dozen revolutions!

Already the blockade is proving to England that her prosperity is not dependent on the great American product of slave labor. If she can do without the cotton crop of the South for one year, she can do without it forever—and she is doing without it. Every coat in England, it is said, is worn in succession by three persons in descending rank, and in America by two. If in each country it can be made, however tattered and torn, to cover one more back, and it can—England can do, and the North can do, without this year's yield of cotton! Both countries are doing without it; expect to do without it, and are both doing well! England is cool and collected, and has not the feeblest intention to break the blockade. Her statesmen see indeed that the blockade is breaking England's galling chain of dependence on Southern cotton, and that now is the chance, never again so clear, of creating by the stimulus of high prices new sources of cotton supply, and so changing the whole direction and relations of that enormous trade. Other fibres too are coming rapidly into the field of competition.—Distant New Zealand offers a reward of £4,000 for a method of utilizing her flax. Tasmania is alive with industry and zeal in the development of this rival for the throne, where bastard cotton for one generation sat undisputed king, and thought himself hereditary lord? Our own country is rapidly discovering that flax is as cheap as cotton, and for many common purposes better. But whether this new fibre, the fruit of free labor, is to hold the world by as strong a cord as cotton, or no, matters not. The prestige of cotton, and the profit and necessity of slavery, is gone with the grand discovery that neither English order and a contented factory population there—nor Northern prosperity and commerce are to be smothered in a single cotton crop, however stringently held at home by a people who meanwhile strain their ears in vain for the welcome sounds of chartist and hungry riot in the streets of Manchester, and their eyes in vain for the predicted prospect of surging flames from the roofs and bloody gutters in the marble

palace streets of mob-ruled and desolated New York. That old bugbear is vanished. England is prosperous without our cotton. The North is essentially whole and sound and flourishing though the Southern trade is dead. The war which is costing the South the loss of all it has—the destruction of its whole commerce, the depreciation of its slave property, the ruin of its financial system—is not harming the loyal States to any considerable degree. If we except the missing industry of the men in the field, which is a loss of \$150,000 a day, we hardly see that we are really losing anything beside. We are saving probably a million a day by our economies and non-importations. We are beginning to stimulate our own manufacturing industry greatly. We are expending our out-goes at home upon the nation itself; taking money in vast sums from one pocket to put it in the other. Our governmental expenses flow round in a steady eddy, which may, in fifty millions at a time, safely reach five hundred millions before it will seriously derange our finances. So long as hardly a dollar gets beyond Sandy Hook, what matters our national debt. Is it anything but a change in the form of our investments?

We have seen the worst already, whether in the field or in trade, and may reasonably expect early improvement in every form of business. And the best of all is that the rebel and slave States, while ruining themselves as slave-holders by forcing the world to learn its independence of cotton, are themselves, by the necessary experiences of their insulation, developing forms of industry and unearthing buried resources, and acquiring habits of unavoidable toil, which will, if the war continues two years, plant among them a wholly new conception of the dignity of work; raise the mean whites into formidable competition with the blacks in the field of labor; break up the lazy sleep of the people; diversify the monotonous industry of the region; make slavery unprofitable and unpopular, and open the road for emancipation on easy and acceptable terms, which they will not improbably propose and we can accept and favor. It is on purely economical accounts not desirable that the war should be short, especially if to make it short it must be revolutionary.

It will be equally good for the North and the South, to take

time to allow the principles of the constitution to work out their penalties as well as their blessings. To put down this rebellion, constitutionally, is to put down slavery, in the only safe and effectual way. To force emancipation—to break the Union and the constitution to free the slave—will be to defeat our national destiny and not accomplish any real emancipation for the slave either. His chain must be loosened link by link; with every rivet taken out, a habit of self-reliance must be put in. He must find a varied industry about him; he must see white men laboring with him; he must get a very different idea of what it is to be free, from what the knowledge of his idle, or imperious master gives him, before he can be safely trusted to himself. Make slavery unprofitable; create and develop new industry on its old field; introduce a new population of immigrants from the North, already there as soldiers, and many of them predestined to stay; let the process going on in Kentucky, Missouri, Maryland, Virginia, creep gradually down to the Gulf; offer a moderate premium for every slave set free; induce by purchase the border States to become wholly free States, and the work is done! The slaves would pass rapidly, though gradually, over into free laborers, without losing their habits of industry; they would still stick to the warm soil they love; the rapid increase of a white population would make them no longer an element of danger at home. Colonization would be favored at the South; the now unnatural rate of their increase in the brutal condition of slavery, would cease; many would go to Central America; many to Africa; many would take the place of household servants at the North and West, pushing our foreign white population into better and finer spheres of labor, and two generations would see this dreadful incubus safely lifted from the land, without one break in the constitution or one flaw in the Union.

The general tenor and object of these reflections must have made themselves very apparent. Against certain nascent tendencies and vague yet powerful dispositions of the public mind to fall back in our national difficulties upon first principles and ideal or abstract aspirations, which clothed, now in the garb of religion and now of philanthropy, are never-

theless really revolutionary and anarchical, however single-hearted and spiritually attractive, we urge, from deep moral convictions, fortified by the lessons of history and the warnings of common sense, the strict adherence of the nation to its nationality ; of the people to the constitution ; of the States to the Union ; of all to the laws.

We are Americans—United States men ! Our country has had a history. Its peculiar life was hid in the special circumstances that gave it being. It came into the world with pangs and groans, bearing in its body the elements of joy and sorrow, of trial and success. It became *itself*, and not another nation, because of peculiarities in the circumstances that shaped it. Its misfortunes, its weaknesses, its difficulties, were from the first, as much a part of its individuality as its advantages and facilities. It has owed its drawbacks to causes which in other respects have been its chariot wheels. Like the original curse of the ground, which has been, if the sorrow, also the making of the world ; so the trials and agitations which the providential elements of discord and mortification in our national life and constitution have been to this country, have proved also its grand sources of political discipline and national education. The characteristic features, the providential individuality of our country are due to those circumstances, whether of advantage or disadvantage, which make it just what it is. This nationality, cost us what sorrow or even mortification it may in some aspects, is still ours. Our constitutional birth-marks are upon us, and though spots in themselves, they are not the less significant, identifying, and for the sake of the precious body in which they inhere, to a certain degree sacred. Like the misshapen foot of a child, which makes it dearer to its mother than its well-favored brothers, we accept the original, in-born defects of the constitution with filial tenderness, hoping the nation will outgrow them, but with no willingness to cut them out at the risk of its life. Our failings, our weaknesses are our own ; they are to be struggled with, overcome, converted into graces, but they are not to be self-righteously disowned, nor thrown in a heap upon a section of the land, to rid the residue of their curse.

What trials and defects, what hereditary weakness and sin

God has permitted to inhere in our national constitution, let us accept with humble submission to his will, and seek by fidelity to our fathers, gratitude for their work and devotion to their plan, to convert into ultimate sources of glory to the nation.

No meanness can be greater than that of refusing to bear each man his own part in the painful responsibilities of the national constitutional misfortunes, after enjoying in so large a degree its blessings. Like Pilate, we may wash our hands and be no cleaner of crime. No! America, our own imperfect, faulty, sin-stricken, yet also strength-abounding, happy and privileged country, is our own in every part. With all her sins and her graces, her curses and her blessings, she is our own dear land! Her history—alike in its shadows and its lights—in its ill-report and its good-report—is more precious to us than any history in the world; and with all its defects, nobler and better than any other! We must therefore reverence our boundaries and maintain them; our constitution and uphold it; our union and preserve it! Nay, we must work out our salvation, with fear and trembling, from the very circumstances and in the very lot in which it is appointed us to be a nation. It is this special nation, and not some other, that we are to perpetuate. It is this very country, and not some other, that we are to save. It is this sacred constitution of our fathers that we propose to vindicate against the sneers, the doubts, and the fears of the world. And we shall do it! We *are* doing it. We are resolved to quell this rebellion in the strength of the law, and by the hand of the government. We will take no radically unconstitutional steps, nor allow the taunts of irresponsible foreigners, nor the incitements of idealists and cosmopolites to drive us into an impatient, unhistoric and unprovidential way of dealing with the original difficulties in our national life. They are great—but so great that God's providence can alone deliver us from them. We will labor, suffer, pray, that they may be wholly eradicated, but we will not be so audacious as to deny our nationality, abandon our history, give up our fathers' and our own antecedents, and seek to become another people and a new nation! No! this very day we are an undivided nation, despite the

armies that confront each other on the Potomac and the Missouri! The love and brotherhood of these States will survive this quarrel. The war was the crisis of a domestic disease that could only thus manifest its virulence and purge away its poison. We must fight it out; unflinchingly, energetically, passionately, unsparingly. We must utterly crush this rebellion; but let us spare the constitution! We must resist the encroachments of slavery and keep it in its own place and sphere; nay, destroy it, if it threatens to destroy us. But let us hope and pray that the country may deal with it as a family weakness and sin, an historic and providential inheritance, with gentleness towards its victims, with consideration for the slave, and with a full consciousness of our partnership in all the wrongs and weaknesses, as in all the hopes and blessings of the nation.



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